

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Report to Congress EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the hub of California's two largest water distribution systems, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) supplies drinking water to more than 22 million people and irrigation water to millions of acres of some of the world's most highly productive agricultural land. It is a haven for 750 plant and animal species and home to hundreds of thousands of people.

Yet, this valuable national resource is inadequately protected by an extremely fragile levee system that threatens to fail at any time, even under fair weather conditions. Unlike other levee systems that protect against high water events, the Delta's maze of mostly non-Federal levees must work all day, every day, to keep water from inundating people living below sea level. These hardworking levees are part of the State-wide water conveyance system, but have suffered as local reclamation districts struggle to properly maintain and improve them.

Recognizing the threat of serious levee failure and its widespread effects, Congress directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) last November to deliver a report that identifies and prioritizes potential levee stability projects in the Delta to be carried out through 2010 using up to the authorized \$90 million to be appropriated for the Federal share of project costs. To quickly identify critical needed projects with active non-Federal support, the USACE invited Delta stakeholders to submit project proposals with letters stating their willingness to participate as cost-sharing sponsors. In response, Delta area reclamation districts and flood management agencies submitted 54 project proposals totaling more than \$1 billion in estimated costs.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Authorization Act directed USACE to prioritize potential projects in this report. The proposals were evaluated according to how well they met USACE environmental, economic, and other implementation criteria. The short-term strategy is to move quickly to construction on high priority levee reconstruction projects identified in this report. The authorized \$90 million of Federal funds, plus the required non-Federal funds, will be an important first step to address Delta-wide levee system needs.

The long-term strategy will be developed in the cost-shared Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Islands and Levees Feasibility Study. The study's scope will assess existing and future flood risks in the Delta area, as well as ecosystem restoration, recreation, and water supply needs, and develop a comprehensive vision and roadmap for future Federal participation in the Delta. The plan, in conjunction with California Department of Water Resources' Delta Risk Management Study, will address remaining levee stability work beyond the \$90 million Federal effort authorized in the CALFED Act.

This report is the first step in a multi-year effort to address levee stability concerns in the Delta region. The prioritized list represents levee repair projects that could be accomplished within the funding and procedural limits of the CALFED Act. Many more potential projects were identified than could be accomplished within the limits of the CALFED authorization. Therefore, an additional list has been provided to include all of the identified projects in prioritized order, in the event that either the authorization is modified or non-Federal implementation is pursued.